

# **The Masters And The Path**

by

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## THE LIVING IMAGE

OUT of the ranks of earnest students and workers of the kind I have already described, the Master has on many occasions selected His pupils. But before He definitely accepts them He takes special precautions to assure Himself that they are really the kind of people whom He can draw into intimate contact with Himself; and that is the object of the stage called Probation. When He thinks of a man as a possible pupil, He usually asks one who is already closely linked with Him to bring the candidate to Him astrally. There is not generally much ceremony connected with this step; the Master gives a few words of advice, tells the new pupil what will be expected of him, and often, in His gracious way, He may find some reason to congratulate him on the work that he has

He then makes a living image of the pupil-- that is to say, He moulds out of mental, astral and etheric matter an exact counterpart of the causal, mental, astral and etheric bodies of the neophyte, and keeps that image at hand, so that He may look at it periodically. Each image is magnetically attached to the person whom it represents, so that every variation of thought and feeling in him is accurately reproduced in it by sympathetic vibration, and thus by a single glance at the image the Master can see at once whether during the period since He last looked at it there has been any sort of

disturbance in the bodies which it represents-- whether the man has been losing his temper, or allowing himself to be a prey to impure feelings, worry, depression, or anything of the kind. It is only after He has seen that for a considerable time no serious excitement has taken place in the vehicles represented by the image, that He will admit the pupil into near relation with Himself.

When the pupil is accepted he must be drawn into a unity with his Master closer than anything we can imagine or understand; the Master wants to blend his aura with His own, so that through it His forces may be constantly acting without special attention on His part. But a relation so intimate as this cannot act in one direction only; if among the vibrations of the pupil there are some which would cause disturbance in the astral and mental bodies of the Adept as they react upon Him, such union would be impossible. The prospective pupil would have to wait until he had rid himself of those vibrations. A probationary pupil is not necessarily better than other people who are not on probation; he is only more suitable in certain ways for the Master's work, and it is advisable to subject him to the test of time, for many people, swept upwards by enthusiasm, appear at first to be most promising and eager to serve, but unfortunately become tired after a while and slip back. The candidate must conquer any emotional failings that he may have, and go on steadily working until he becomes sufficiently calm and pure. When for quite a long time there has been no serious upheaval in the living image, the Master may feel that the time has come when He can usefully draw the pupil nearer to Him.

We must not think of the living image as recording only defects or disturbances. It mirrors the whole condition of the pupil's astral and mental consciousness, so it should record much of benevolence and joyousness, and should radiate forth peace on earth and goodwill to men. Never forget that not only a passive but also an active goodness is always a prerequisite for advancement. To do no harm

is already much; but remember that it is written of our Great-Exemplar that He went about doing good. And when the Lord Buddha was asked to epitomize the whole of His teaching in one verse, He began: "Cease to do evil," but immediately He continued: "Learn to do good."

If a pupil on probation does something unusually good, for the moment the Master flashes a little more attention on him, and if He sees fit He may send a wave of encouragement of some sort, or He may put some work in the pupil's way and see how he does it. Generally, however, he delegates that task to some of His senior pupils.. We are supposed to offer opportunities to the candidate, but to do so is a serious responsibility. If the person takes the opportunity, all is well; but if he does not, it counts as a bad mark against him. We should often like to give opportunities to people, but we hesitate, because although if they take them it will do them much good, if they do not take them it will be a little harder to do so next time.

It will be seen, then, that the link of the pupil on probation with his Master is chiefly one of observation and perhaps occasional use of the pupil. It is not the custom of the Adepts to employ special or sensational tests, and in general, when an adult is put on probation, he is left to follow the ordinary course of his life, and the way in which the living image reproduces his response to the trials and problems of the day gives quite sufficient indication of his character and progress. When from this the Master concludes that the person will make a satisfactory disciple, He will draw him nearer and accept him. Sometimes a few weeks is sufficient to determine this; sometimes the period stretches into years.